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NEWS

Office of Media Relations
600 Lincoln Avenue
Charleston, IL 61920-3099
(www.eiu.edu/~pubaff/omr.htm)

Contact: Shelly Flock (csslf@eiu.edu)
Vicki Woodard (csvns@eiu.edu)
217-581-7650
217-581-8444 (fax)

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For Immediate Release:

SPEAKERS TO DISCUSS PERSONAL IMPACT OF CHIEF ILLINIWEK CONTROVERSY

CHARLESTON – Although the Chief Illiniwek controversy plaguing the University of Illinois has caught the attention of thousands, some individuals are feeling the effects -- both directly and indirectly -- in a very personal way.

Two of those will tell their stories when they visit the campus of Eastern Illinois University. The presentation, which is free and open to the public, is set to begin at 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 27, in the Kansas Room of the University Union.

Ben Crew, a Champaign businessman, plans to tell the story of adopted son, Wayne, who will turn 15 next month. According to Crew, Wayne was a third-grader when he first began studying his Native American roots and immersing himself in his culture and its people.

Crew said his son "embraced" this way of life and the obligations entailed in doing so. But while his adoptive family chose to support Wayne in his endeavors, others weren't so eager to do so, Crew said.

He claims that students, as well as teachers and administrators of the public school system, harassed Wayne Crew to the point that his parents began home-schooling their child. Then, 14 months ago, Ben and Cyd Crew sent their son to live with out-of-state relatives.

Cyd Crew, who is pursuing her doctorate at the University of Illinois, plans to graduate in

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Eastern Illinois University emphasizes distinguished teaching in the liberal arts, sciences and selected professions. A traditional, residential state university of recognized quality, Eastern enrolls more than 10,000 students in undergraduate and graduate programs. The university, located in Charleston, also serves the region through a variety of non-credit and off-site degree programs, as well as cultural and recreational opportunities. Eastern's pursuit of excellence attracts well-qualified students of an increasingly diverse population and a teaching faculty active in research and public service who utilize the latest technology.

May. According to Ben Crew, the family will then sell its Champaign home and relocate in order to be with their son on a permanent basis.

Joining Crew in next week's visit to EIU will be William "Dean" Cook, who made headline news in January when he was arrested at a U of I women's basketball game. Cook, who is reported to have been yelling accusations that Chief Illiniwek is a racist symbol and then allegedly made obscene gestures at fans who asked him to stop, was asked by security staff to leave. When he refused, police arrested him, later charging him with criminal trespass and resisting a police officer.

U of I Chancellor Nancy Cantor later was reported as saying that Cook's free speech rights were likely infringed upon by the university's security staff.